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DATE March 12, 1985

Rev. Avis L. Hill
 (Signature - Interviewee)

Alum Creek,
 (Address)

W. Va. 25003

DATE _____

[Signature]
 (Signature - Witness)

Hill, Rev. Avis L.
 3/12/85
 KCTC-7

AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: Rev. Avis L. Hill

CONDUCTED BY: Jim Deeter

SUBJECT: Kanawha County Textbook Controversy

DATE OF INTERVIEW: March 12, 1985

TRANSCRIBED & TYPED BY: Gina Kehali Kates

INTERVIEW WITH: AVIS L. HILL BY JIM DEETER
SUBJECT: KANAWHA COUNTY TEXTBOOK CONTROVERSY

JD: This is Jim Deeter interviewing Avis Hill on March the 12th, 1985 in Radio Station WSCW in South Charleston, West Virginia. And Avis was and is a pastor of a church in the area and was involved in the Kanawha Valley Textbook Controversy in 1974 and '75. And this particular tape will be used as historical research for a thesis concerning this textbook issue of some ten years ago. So that said, Avis, let me ask you to just tell a little bit about your background, where you grew up and how you came to be involved in the ministry and all that sort of thing. So just share a bit of your background.

AH: Sure, I was born in West Virginia in Lincoln County in 1943; I'm forty-one years old. Anduh, was raised in the rural area here near Charleston, south of Charleston, and graduated from DuVall High School. Anduh, after high school, completing high school, went into the construction work. And after construction work, went into plumbing apprentice school, served my plumbing apprentice and became a licensed plumber. Then became a master plumber and owned a business, plumbing business, in St. Albans for about seven year. At which time, during the time of the textbook controversy there in '73 really when it started getting started, a year, January 1972 I was saved. Up until that time, I was most aspiring young business man, wanting to make my mark and was finding myself socializing in all the right crowds and in all the right organizations, a member of the Lions Club and the Jaycees and active in community activities. Anduh, but I found that in all my social life, I was neglecting the family, my daughter and my wife. And we were very near the point of divorce whenever the Lord got a hold of my life. It was because of fundamental teachings from my younger years. My mother has been a Christian all of her life, took me to church, Sunday School training. And it was that basic teaching that was always coming back to mind, because I knew I had an old mom that was praying for me, even when I was in sin. Anduh, my life was really in shambles. I'd, the thing the textbooks were showing me, I was upset about what they were

teaching the students and the children.

were in there and you could read those in bathroom walls at public buildings. Earlier before I was saved, I had gotten into some of the pornography and smut films. Back then they were called stag films. And they were under the counter and back rooms, that type thing. I was involved with some things like that. Not that I'm proud of any of those things. I was not faithful to my family, to my wife. And that's the reason why that I was-, our home was about ready to be destroyed. And when Christ came into my life, I was near the point of suicide. Andh, so these basic fundamental teachings were conflicting with the worldly teachings today. And just thank God I had some Christian people who cared for me and shared Jesus Christ with me and loved me enough to invite me to church. And January the 9, 1972, I made the decision to serve the Lord. And uh, then the textbook controversy came along. I was an evangelist. After I was saved, I was saved for about a year and the Lord called me into the ministry. Andh, I began a tent revival, tent meeting, in St.Albans. And uh, whenever we were in the tent revival, the whole summer I was twelve weeks in a tent revival in StAlbans. And we had a tremendous outpouring of young people making decisions for the Lord. And in that year, they were showing the textbooks in Kanawha Valley at different schools, and they were trying to get me involved. And I said, "No, I really don't have time, I'm into the ministry. I'm into the work of the Lord and I'm evangelizing." And I just don't have time. And on the weekend of Labor Day...

JD: Now, is this in 197-...(AH: 1972-, '73) '73.

AH: On Labor Day, 1973, this one we, the big rally was on a Monday at Campbell's Creek Park. But on the Friday night before that, they had a meeting in StAlbans, and they estimated-, or Sunday rather. And they asked me if I kind offer the opening and closing prayer for this outdoor meeting at the St.Albans Roadside Park.

JD: This was a meeting about the textbook?

AH: About the textbooks.

JD: Now, are you sure this is '72, or was it '74?

AH: Seventy-two, wasn't it?

JD: Well, the textbook controversy actually began in early '74 in May and then it went in to.....

AH: Alright, I'm sorry then. I'm confused on my date. Then it would have been in the latter part, Labor Day of '74, last of the summer. (JD: Okay, that fits) Okay, '74 then. And that was right before Labor Day.

JD: Now, up to that point you hadn't been involved before?

AH: Up until that point I had not been involved. The sex education controversy came up a year or so before that with Alice Moore anduh, with uh, minister up at the Elk Valley Christian Academy, Charles Meadows, (JD: I know Charles) they really got into that, over the sex education. But I not got involved any at all. I had not been involved any whatsoever during the summer they were showing the textbooks.

JD: Had they been trying to get you involved? (AH: Oh, yes, a number of times) You were aware of the controversy...how soon? What-, about when....?

AH: I was aware probably when they started showing the books in the spring. (JD: May or June of '74) Yeah. However, it just wasn't of interest to me at that particular point. Anduh, I just did not particularly care. I felt that God was wanting me in evangelism particularly. I didn't feel like, quite honestly, I had always gone on this assumption that you, that we'd heard for years thath, like a mayor down in, or an accessory in Kanawha County one day and said to me, he said, "Reverend Hill," this was Dempsey Gibson, said, "Reverend Hill," said, "I'll tell you what.

planes to Washington D.C." And he patted me on the back, he said, "I tell you what. Why don't you stay to preaching behind the pulpits and in the churches and leave the politicking up to us." And he was about three sheets to the wind at that time, sitting on the plane drinking highballs. And uh, so I had kind of taken that through the years, you know, because we had been linked. Anyone gets in politics you can't be-, if you go, if you're a good man that goes into office, he'll be

crooked before he gets out, you know, that type thing. And we've been told that stuff, brainwashed with it. So I thought, "Man, politics is a farce what my calling is. Let the politicians handle the politics and I'll handle church." So I did not find myself interested in any way. Until that Sunday afternoon. One other time, my daughter was required a couple of years before that, before I was even saved, to give a, an article, write an article and give an oral report on evolution. And she came home to me one day and she'd been to summer, church camp, and she had accepted the Lord when she was about six years old. And she said, "Dad, you know we don't believe in evolution and I believe in creation." And I said, "Sure, I know that." She said, "My teachers tells me I have to give a report on evolution tomorrow and I told her I didn't want to do a report because of our belief. And she said if I didn't, she'd fail me." And I said, "Well," at that time I said, "don't worry. If you don't want to give it, don't give it." So without any coaching from me, anything, she went to school the next day and the teacher asked her to give a report. She stood up and class and said, "I can't give a report on evolution, but I do have a report I will give." She pulled her little Bible out of her handbag and opened it up and began to read out of Genesis. And the teacher failed her for it. Well, that kind of really scalded me. But I've kind of let that, you know..... And then I began to notice at that time, after time had passed in the textbook controversy. They asked me to open a prayer and I opened a prayer. Then they began to show me the textbooks that afternoon. And there must have been probably 250 people down there at the StAlbans Roadside Park. And I began to look at those phrases and I began to see what the language of the textbooks had to offer. And I thought, "My Lord, I can't believe this." Then I began to see, put two and two together. At that time, everyone was talking about a generation gap. Moms and fathers were not causing the generation gaps. There was rebellion among the kids, and I, then it dawned on me. Hey, I know where the rebellion is. Rebellion is not the separation of the children from the parents at home. The parents are teaching one standard and the schools telling your children another. And they're

packing Johnny's lunch bucket, combing his hair, patting him on the head and say, "Honey, you go to school today now. You mind what your teacher says." And the, the philosophy of the textbooks secularism and the attitudes of evolution and all that is being thrown into their heads. And then coming home and the parents having another standard. So there was a generation gap. There was a pulling apart thing. And I thought, "Hey, here's where the trouble is." So that's the day I got involved.

JD: What were some of the things in the textbooks that you looked at that were so offensive and you felt were destructive?

AH: Well, gutter language, four-letter words that could be written in the textbooks and put in the classroom but yet the Federal Communication System, FCC, would not allow the radio or television to read them out over the airways. Uh, revolutionaries such as Malcom X, Eldridge Cleveland, Angela Davis, the radical extremist, people who were sewing the American flag on the seat of their pants and burning in the streets, and rioting, they were lifted up. And, and they teach Eldridge Cleveland in one of these books, that he would rather I believe it was, have one white girl from the other side of the tracks, or something like that, than to have twelve bitches, or something, you know, black bitches. Putting down his own race, you know.....

JD: Now was that actually, Avis, was that actually....? (AH: That was a supplement) yeah, that was a supplemental textbook called [inaudible]....and it was required-, it was not required reading. It was a supplemental book somebody could check out of the library. (AH: Yes) And if the language arts teachers said this is a book you can read, that you felt, that your group felt and you felt, that that shouldn't even be in the library? Is that correct?

AH: Yes. Most, most of our, most of our objections were more to supplement our books. But down in the elementary, in the language arts in elementary school, in the, in the textbooks, role playing and theuh, stories, children's stories about the wolf and the three little pigs, and these, all the characters were depicted as evil, blood-dripping, you know..... The pictures and things,

you know, it was just hideous to me that they would have to project that kind of ad. A picture, in order to get a story across..... So much rebellion that was being taught in those..... We were objecting not to just the supplemental but we were objecting to the elementary class books, also, because of these types of situations around. Everything was down. There was nothing positive. Most of it was negative.

JD: So you were at this meeting in St.Albans Roadside Park or whatever it was, that you mentioned. (AH: Yes) And you began to look at the textbooks, that was in the fall of '74 (AH: Yes, right) Labor Day. And you were convinced then, that you needed to get involved, I assume.

AH: Right, as a minister. Not just as a minister, but as a father with a child in the Kanawha County System. (JD: Okay) At that particular point, it was not that the Lord-, that the Lord called me spiritually to step out in this. But I stepped out as a concerned father at that point.

JD: What did you begin to do now to take an active part?

AH: Well, at that point then, there was also Marvin had a rally at Park up there on Campbell's Creek, the very same afternoon. He left there and he came down, they meet us all down there that night. They knew we were having a rally, too. So we began to raise money and we purchased an ad in the newspaper that weekend that we were going to have a giant Labor Day rally at Campbell's Creek Roadway Park on Labor Day Monday. That was the day before school started. I think it was at 1 or maybe 2 o'clock, 2 o'clock, I believe. And by 12 o'clock, so many people in the valley after seeing the newspaper article, were coming, that the traffic was backed up halfway to the state capitol from Campbell's Creek, creating a big traffic jam. And there was, the park was full. So at that particular time, we did not choose-, we chose to, I think that day, keep our children out of school on the first day of school, and organize a protest and take our grievances to the Board of Education. So we selected a committee. And I think there was about 10 or 12 of us on it, with Alice Moore at the head. We took our grievances to the Board of Education upstairs in the conference room with the board members and all of

them. And at that time, the issue was very hot. And there was probably a thousand people surrounding the Board of Education. And that's really how the issue got started. And from there it just catapulted along.

JD: One educator wrote an article a short time after that. And he stated that the controversy began with a small segment of society. Would you agree with that statement? A small segment of Kanawha Valley.

AH: Yes. People, yes, I would say it did. Uh, I'd say it started with a small segment because basically the people began to stand up and speak out for people who were basically it was not their trait to do that. They were quiet, church-going people, Bible-believing people. Not all of them were church-goers. But they all had fundamental, moral teachings and beliefs in their life. I mean, they believed in paying their bills and raising their family, you know live and let live, so to speak. And it, it started with a small number of people. A lot of people...I've heard a lot of reports from a lot of educators and NEA and and they said this is a well-financed move. And a lot of big groups came in. I can honestly say that I honestly believe that God chose that situation at that time. It was not something that was planned or organized. It was spontaneous.

JD: Well, I felt the same way as I read about it and I talked to people about it. Uh, how much of an issue would the cultural thing be now? I've heard people say that this was a cultural issue between people in Campbell's Creek and that part of the county, as compared to people in the Eastern part-, Western part of the county. How would you?

AH: The Eastern and Western part of this county are pretty much the same. The big difference in this county lies in the Great Kanawha Valley, in this urbanized Charleston area. You have to realize that in the rural areas of the Eastern part of this county, the south, too, the people are basically rural, fundamental Bible-believing people. There are two socially in this county. And Charleston does, by the DuPont, FMC, Carbide, they do

have a lot of liberal trends, a lot of Madison Avenue influence in this area. Andh, there's a good bit, not a good bit, a large amount, there's large-, big money in thiKanawha Valley area. There was a social conflict, no question about it. But basically, the traditions of the Appalachian people, our values were being threatened, the family, the home. And they read that as such. Because in years past, I remember, I went to a two-room schoolhouse when I was just a young boy in the country. I remember when the schoolhouse doubled for the old circuit riding preachers. I remember when they had revivals in schools. Andh, the school was a social and the church were a social place socially to meet. And the morals and the attitudes of the family....you know, I can remember in my younger years when, in the rural area, a person-, you didn't even have to worry about locking your doors at night. And basically, this rural area, Appalachia today, from Kentucky through all the Appalachians and Tennessee and North Carolina, in the rural areas many people look at the folks as being backwoods and uneducated, and uh, unlearned. But they care for one another. And education and money cannot substitute that part of caring. And many people saw that threatening their families and lives. And that, that part of that area, yes, they came forward. And there was a social....

JD: How did someone who, let's say was a loyal person who had not been trained to look for things, to see things the way an educator might or someone who had spent time. How did they get knowledge that this was bad stuff oruh, you know...

AH: Basically, it wasn't hard. You know, it's some kind of.... You don't have to be educated when you find four-letter words that is written in bathrooms on walls. Education should be something that teaches the people how to use and have a better vocabulary and use better words than trash gutter language. Why go to school and learn trash and gutter language when you can learn that without going to school. These folks hadn't gone to school, and they knew all that stuff. So.... And the "educators", the social classes, they just, they were going to a new scene, they just learned a new language. And the attitudes and the cursing and the violence and

the things that was made-, taught in the classrooms, that was something that even though, what a lot of people don't realize, that if a coal miner in this area, he's been taught in his life, I mean in his younger years, they usually talk about Boone County being sound-Christianized and being unchurched here in West Virginia, yes, Boone County is. But at least 80% of them don't go to church. But, I guarantee you they find that kind of number of people that say they are Atheist or they do not believe in God.

training from their parents.... But they're God-fearing people. And, you know, they understand those things. So the, I'm about to lose my train of thought here. The uneducated folks, so to speak, that's the way they were looked upon. Because they were maybe high school dropouts or whatever, you know. But they, they didn't have enough, didn't know what was going on until they got

and they'd already been through what the textbooks were showing and they didn't need that for their children. They thought education was teaching their children basics and education, you know, how to be able to balance their checkbook. Many of them couldn't even read or write, okay? And they did not want that for their children. And here we are today, ten years down the road, the illiteracy, the, the percentage of illiteracy in high school graduates has risen so much. And they were fighting against that very thing that they were victims of in their childhood, because they were on the farms at that time. They did not have the advantages of school, the opportunity to go to school. Many of them had to quit when they were young to go help their father's on the farm. And they had to work with their hands, and just literally grub and sweat and toil and make a living to live. And now they had acquired jobs as miners and plant workers and they wanted things better for their children. They thought education was going to make it better for their children. Then they found out that the educational system was teaching them things that they had to go through and they didn't want that to happen to theirs. That's, that I feel like, is a big part of what happened.

JD: So, after Labor Day of '74, you got involved. You said you withheld you-, you all agreed to withhold your children from school (AH: Yes) when school started. What was the purpose in that? Why did you feel that was important?

AH: Well, we were very naive and we thought that, you know, the Kanawha Valley people who were elected to the Board of Education would listen to what we had to say. Finally, we had a large enough number of people to go to the Board of Education andh, speak out voice. And we felt that probably as ministers that we would, our views would be appreciated and that we could, that they would welcome our views. And we thought it was a local issue. And we felt that when we brought it to the attention of the Board of Education that the majority of the people of Kanawha County were against it, that there wouldn't be any big problem, that they'd just recognize the fact they made a mistake and [inaudible]...take those books out of school and we'll just use the proceeding year's adoption of textbooks and not put those in. It wasn't as though they didn't have books—they had books from the proceeding adoption.

JD: Is that what you, really wanted them to do? (AH: Yes) You wanted them to throw out all the textbooks (AH: Yes) there were 318 of them. (AH: Yes) You wanted them to throw all of those out and just use the books they had from the previous five years?

AH: Right. We were willing-..... Of course, now you see, at that particular point, we were willing for that. But we didn't know, we hadn't studied what was in the previous language arts adoption of the previous five years. We didn't know. This thing didn't just happen in five years. Probably we would have scrutinized those and looked those over then after we'd looked through the others. But nevertheless, we were, that's what we were wanting.

JD: What about the books that had already been purchased? The whole warehouse full of books that had already been purchased?

AH: Well, that's where the problem started to get (JD: Yeah, I sensed that) where it mattered, the dollars. And uh, when it first started, it was on a small scale. And a lot of people said, well, the

miners were the ones that created-, talked the national news media to come in. That's probably true. But it was not something orchestrated. I don't know whether you've been told or not, how the miners got in to the textbook controversy.

JD: Well, they had a contract that was about up. And they had nothing to do better.

AH: It's miner's wife, who were good friends. And we were going to every place we could, not picketing, just carrying signs of protest, asking people to help us in this effort. We were at the plants, we were everywhere. Me and two or three mothers took some signs down one morning. And they went to a coal mine. And they were just standing beside the gate holding those signs and asking the father's if they would help in this effort. Not picket. One of the coal miners, said "Hey, is this a picket?" [laughing] And they said no. And one of the miners said, "Well, it's my child. It's my children. I'm not walking out because I'm a coal miner. I'm walking out because I'm a father." And that's how pickets, so to speak, started at the coal mines. It didn't start in any organized effort. These mother's met, and then the father's who were miners realized the power that they had from pickets and contracts, okay, but it had nothing to do with the UMW contract. It started with those miners. And from there, then it began to snowball. That one mine and the miners that morning, they recognized those mothers and they took that as a picket. They even shut the mine down. They said, "Hey, we'll not just shut ours down, but go on up the road here and shut-, and get our other brothers out." And it just began to snowball. And before you realize it, Kanawha County mines were all closed down, the Fayette County mines were closed down, the Boone County mines were closed down. And it just wasn't Kanawha County people. But there were Kanawha County miners who worked in these other mines in other counties. So you had people from three or four or five different counties who were coming to Charleston, those miners. That's what brought in the national limelight. Whenever the miners came in, they began to protest and they began to shut down Smith Transfer and Kroger's and all these things. Then at last the news media saw a big story here. They something erupting here.

And I don't know the articles that had been written. And I don't know how history is gonna finally make this thing turn out. Only the things that's wrote in the history books. (JD: That's right) But uh, nevertheless, UMW had nothing to do with it. These were just concerned parents.

JD: How much influence did outsiders have? Now, you say after the national media got a hold of the thing, and uh, you know, and began to be published all over the country, that Kanawha County was mixed up in a textbook controversy, things were happening. And people from outside began to come in. Now, you mentioned Nell and Norma Gaebler. They came in as requested by Alice Moore and others. Was that a good move, or was it not?

AH: Yes, I think it was a good move. I think it was a fine move. The fact of the matter, the reason why we probably went out of the state and brought people, not necessarily that did we go out and get them, but they came to us. Because there was many small groups of opposition from Prince Maryland to Kenosha, Wisconsin to Detroit, Michigan to McKee's Port, Pennsylvania to all over the United States there were small pockets of resistance.

the system. But they were so small in number. But they saw that there was an opportunity, a chance here in Kanawha Valley because of the Bible Belt and the fundamental beliefs of the people and the miners. Then they saw the opportunity for them. So they wanted to pull their alliance with us because we had the largest number of people. So the news media was catapulting this thing. Because had they not spoken about it, and had it not ever been on the national wire service and the national media, Kenosha, Wisconsin and McKee's Port, Pennsylvania, they would never have heard about it, see. And Texas and the Gaebler's. But they came to us more than we came to them. So I think it was good, in that the fact that the news media here was trying to depict us as a bunch of radical, no-nothing's. And one reason why we went out and we brought people, we brought Dr.

in from Florida. When the NEA had their big meeting here in Charleston, we along with the Heritage Foundation, we had our own in Charleston. And we brought as many people in with

credentials as NEA brought in. We felt that we needed to bring some people from the educational standards with Ph.D's and Master's degrees, educators, into to repudiate what the educational system was saying. Anduh, that's just like in court, well, is it wrong to bring someone in? No, it's, it's, it maybe wrong for us to bring something in, but is it all right for the prosecutor to bring an expert witness in? Sure it is. And the judge will recognize him as an expert witness. Well, I, as a fundamental self-ordained minister, I'm no expert. I'm not an educational expert. What does my word...how far does my word go with the educational establishment? So, we brought people in who were expert witnesses. They had just as good credentials as.....

END OF SIDE 1 - TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE 2 - TAPE 1

JD: Okay, Avis, you were talking about the 30-day cooling off period and what happened to spoil that.

AH: I think the media had a whole lot to do with spoiling it. I think the media sensationalized so much. It was they were selling good copy. The Charleston Gazette and the Charleston Daily Mail, and WSAZ, and all the small affiliate stations, the national media. As I spoke not long ago, I think there was probably so many Pulitzer prize winning articles came out of here, and a lot of people really lined their pockets with some money and moved up through the media because of the textbook controversy. And they didn't want to see it stopped. They were excited about it. It was a media event.

JD: Wasn't it....was it true that even some of the people on your side of the controversy were looking to get themselves built up?

AH: I'm sure of that, I'm sure of that.

JD: I've heard it said by some opposition.

AH: I'm sure that there probably was some. I will honestly say that I believe, that at one time, I

had 23,000 on the mailing list. I was mailing to all 50 states, plus Canada and Mexico. I was sending letters and communing with people here nationally. We could have probably had a national ministry from this. I can say for myself I was in it for the big bucks or in it for a big name.

There may have been some who were ambitious. Some said because we ran for political office we were ambitious. I wasn't ambitious when I ran for congress here in the 3rd Congressional District in 1976. You mentioned '73 and '74. But this thing went with me 'til 1977. In 1976 I ran for political office, in Congress. We had to rake and scrape to get the filing fee. I spent a thousand dollars, including my filing fee running for office in the 3rd Congressional District and not even known politically ever before, only on the basis of textbooks. Not even with the money to go out and campaign and go get my part-, my people together. We received 10% of the vote. And many said, well, you know..... I was not running to win. It takes less money to put the pressure on the man to make him change his mind than it does to take that office. I ran, I ran to speak my point of view, to get me a pulpit, really. People say, well, you were soapboxing.

Whatever. It did not matter. Any way that I could get the message out, the people.... Now, we did have some run for political office and they were totally sincere and thought right up 'til the day of election they were gonna win. I knew our people were not gonna win. And we did not have the organization together. But there was some that ran that thought in their heart they were gonna win. And they spent a good amount of money. Some of them nearly went broke trying to win. I didn't run ever with the intentions to win. (JD: Interesting) I didn't run for the Board of Education with the intentions to win.

JD: You actually ran for the Board of Education?

AH: Yes. I ran to get a point of view across. And to let them know that somewhere down the road, if they didn't deal with it now, they're gonna have to deal with an Avis Hill, maybe not an educated type person. But somewhere though, I really believe that, this textbook controversy and the conservative mood in the Kanawha Valley, is responsible for Mick Staton being elected

to the House of Representatives. Because Mick was-, worked in one of the banks here, Mick was in the textbook controversy with the Professional Business Men's Alliance. I believe iMick, the people believed in Mick and they liked him. And I believe Mick Staton would have been in office today butuh, I believe he underestimated Bob Wise. But that's neither here nor there. But that's what I'm saying.

JD: As the textbook controversy continued now through the winter of '74, there were meetings that were being held all over the county. One particular meeting, now my information is the school board was continually seeking ways to arbitrate to get this thing settled. Because they were having bad publicity, schools I think shut down. And they started wanting to have meetings. So they set up a meeting on Wednesday at noon, every Wednesday at noon, in the basement of Christ Methodist Church in Charleston. And they had three or four board members and a superintendent, and a lot of the people involved in the controversy, come in and have these [inaudible].....

JD: Okay.

AH: I was there. We had gone to those. And contrary to what the board says, if they wanted to negotiate and really get...they had a big conference room right there at the Board of Education. They didn't need to go down to Christ Church Methodist [inaudible]

JD: Well, they said they were afraid the thing would get out of hand.

AH: It wouldn't have got out of hand. They were not genuine sincerely-, sincere in their negotiations. What they had done, it was a ploy, just to wear you down and continually wear you out [inaudible] and go back home. At that particular time, the Board of Education did not want to meet, because they [inaudible]...the Board of Education.

JD: What I understand that actually broke those meetings up was the sheriff appeared there one day with a warrant for their arrest. (AH: Yes, yes, right) The school board. And they actually

arrested them.

AH: Right. The town, city of Cedar Grove, because the textbooks in the schools up there, town of Cedar Grove issued warrants for the Board of Education on obscenity, I think it was.

JD: Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor.

AH: Contributing to the Delinquency of Minors, right. And I knew that day that the Board of Education was going to be arrested. Because they would not meet and they would not come together anywhere. And the day we knew that the town of Cedar Grove, Cedar Grove was going to send the police down to arrest them, yes, we did.

JD: Well, okay, there was a lot of, that was a ploy, you say, and people weren't really sincere.

AH: They weren't sincere. They didn't [inaudible]

JD: Another area that I want to ask you about is, isuh, a man told me, ElmerFike, Elmer told me you all tried to meet-, someone tried to meet atSmiley's Restaurant a couple of times. And those meetings were designed to get all the anti-textbook people together so you could be a cohesive force. And he said, Elmer said, that you could never, that he could never get everybody together, everybody wanted their own agenda. It was hard to get everybody together.

AH: Yeah, I think you're right. There was even-, there were facts as I was telling you earlier before we got on the air, the secret to anything, if you want to win over something, just divide and conquer. There was-, I'd be lying if I said there was total unity in the textbook controversy among the anti-text, there was not. Uh...may I say that from the standpoint of rural people, and this just holds true all over Appalachia, they don't tend to trust anyone outside their social area of their lifestyle. If it's

[inaudible].....(JD: Yeah, I know what you're saying). And I think there was a lot of mistrust there.

I, I tried to, I tried and I think Elmer would probably tell you, I think I probably came closer to working with ElmerFike [inaudible-muffled voice]

a good friend of mine. He's a congressman now. I think probably I tried to pull out our groups

together. But there were some who would not. There were some in our organization, not my organization, but some of the ministers. And they, and myself were not the only ministers involved. There were other ministers involved on a lower profile whose names was not as often as ours. But I think he had a substantial number of people. He listened to me. And there was, there was factual differences quite often. And I realized, I knew that eventually that would probably be what would cause the thing to just come apart. And the Board of Education had much money and finances behind them and we were very limited. I operated the textbook controversy in the Kanawha Valley out of my office from the '74 period up until '76 or '77, I think it was.Concerned Citizens of Kanawha County. During all that time, there was about \$18,000 came across our books. And of course, it was was, you know. And we had checks, canceled checks, But people were talking about us being mass funded, big monies and all this. We didn't have big monies. We sacrificed. Whenever the Republicans and Democrats were in Washington D.C., having their national conventions, and for every forum I was there, trying to speak. When they were having their hospitality and their caucuses in their hospitality suites, I was there. And they couldn't understand where I was coming from. But they didn't understand the fact that I'd slept in my van, I had hamburger at McDonald's the night before and went to a service station and washed my face and shaved in a mirror in the service station in order to be there, you see. (JD: Mmm-hmm) As long as they could live, the other group could live in the Hilton and have their expense accounts and fly in by jet and get out by jet, why, they thought, "Hey man, you can't do it, don't do it that way." So they couldn't understand how-, the sacrifice we were making. I made a-, I lost \$54,000 the first year, I lost my business. And I was willing to give in that. And that's what kept it alive. And of course, you never hear those things. That's not on the media. You never heard the media that my church was fire bombed and that there was nineteen bullet holes in my church there.

JD: But the interesting point, because a lot of the emphasis has been in uh, the media and some other areas. The violence supposedly done by all the anti-textbook people. And you're saying then the pro-textbook people or somebody actually did violence to you and your church?

AH: I was, I was hit three different times. The first one was right after Christmas. We'd gone up in the mountains and we'd purchased trees, some trees through Christmas to help finance our Christian school and the movement we were doing. Shortly after New Year's, I don't remember just exactly what year it was, I woke up at 2 o'clock in the morning heard gunfire.

in St. Albans but a whole in the wall. And we had to remodel it, had no water, no bathroom, anything. We had to work it all over ourselves. But at 2 a.m. my wife in the bedroom and I was in the living room, and I'd gone to sleep on the couch. She began to scream and holler and said, "Someone's shooting!" and I woke up and heard gunfire. And I opened up the window and looked out on the parking lot where the Christmas trees were, they had set the Christmas trees on fire. And there was only one exit out of the building. I called the Kanawha County Sheriff's Department. I told the Sheriff's Department about it. They came down about two hours later to investigate. The news media came down and took pictures where they'd shot bullet holes through the plate glass window going to the sanctuary. But the news media made it appear that I, that it was a publicity stunt. Anduh, too, they came back and hit me two times after that.

JD: Now, when you say they hit you, you're talking about they did damage....

AH: Gunfire, gunfire. All together as I said, there was either 17 or 19 bullet holes in the building. The bullets are still there. And the police department, I had called the sheriff's department and asked them to come down and investigate. And they would come a couple of hours later, never hear anything from it. I was just literally a nervous wreck, just, just about ready to have a nervous breakdown. I slept with my clothes on for six months with a rifle laying on the couch with one eye open. Receiving letters through the mail with blood on them, telling me they were going to rape my wife and kill my daughter, all that stuff. Threatening phone calls continuously.

And I was, it was really psychological warfare. Now I don't know who did that. I know the Klan did not like me, because I wouldn't openly endorse them.

JD: Ku Klux Klan was actually in the area then?

AH: Oh, yes. Uh, to be quite honest, I don't know why the violence came toward me at that time.

But the news media would try to relate me and tie me in with the Klan. I was not a member of the Klan, never had anything to do with the Klan. They were trying-, the Klan would try to put pressure on me to get me to come forth and endorse them, and I couldn't stand for what they stood for. And so, I really don't know where that part of the violence came from. Although, I'm not saying the Klan did that. But I'm saying that that violence came to me. And here's the reason, and it stopped. I took all I could take. My family's life, I felt, was being in jeopardy. I had people guarding the church at night and staying downstairs in the church. My dad took a six month's leave of absence from his job to stay there at night. So people guarded the place at night so I could sleep. I finally had taken all I could take. And I heard by way of underground that there was some heavy artillery that could be purchased at an underground price in this valley.

And I proceeded at that time, the Kanawha County Sheriff's Department is not doing anything to protect me. I have to protect myself. I'd never owned a gun in my life until that time. So, I proceeded to go, heard about the uh, artillery that could be purchased. I gave the man a hundred dollars and he brought me back a Thompson sub-machine gun, .45 raw clip in it.

And I called the Kanawha County Sheriff's Department and I told the Sheriff's Department.

Because I nearly

after that. But I called the sheriff's department and told them, I said, "I'm tired of calling you guys and asking you to come and help me. I know you've got patrol cars here in St. Albans five minutes away. Then you're two hours showing up." I said, "I'm tired of calling you and asking you to come and help me. And I bought, I have my own security now. I have the means of taking care of myself. And I want you to know that the next time that I call you, you

when there seemeth no way." And he spoke my name that night. He knew that I was his son.

And I had no more problems. It was a peace that passeth all understanding that came that night.

And I had no more trouble. And it's those type of experiences that have let me know what side I'm really on. And it wasn't money, it wasn't popularity. I don't care whether anyone ever knows my name or not. I am troubled when I see our kids today.

[inaudible] before they have an opportunity to live in this world.

And Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself and do unto others as you'd have them do unto you." Ten years later a decade has gone and past. And I can see that hindsight's 20/20. I see what's happened in ten years since the standards have really come down, the sex revolution and all of that. I know whose side I'm on. When I

the Lord, he said, "Choose you this day whom you'll serve." And I said, "Lord, I'm going with you." And I went with him. And I'm proud I went with him. And uh, it's uh, it was an emotional time. And it's an emotional time now as I'm talking on this thing. I can't get into it without feeling the presence of the Lord. And it's not just something that happened. I feel that God used me. Not because it was something I wanted. But it, he saw my heart.

JD: Did anything good come out of this controversy?

AH: Yes, yes, much. You've heard the term,

We never lost. We never lost. The fundamental changes that are taking place right now are the basics of education, getting back to the basics. They made fun of us when we said readin', writin', and arithmetic. But now the educators are saying readin', writin', arithmetic. Uh, you know, the social things

and let's get back some teaching the kids, you know, so they can fill out an employment application when they get out of school, and they can read the newspapers and the classified ad. Yeah, it's changed, but it's changing.

JD: Do you think that was [inaudible]

AH: I think from a standpoint of education, I also believe that we started the ball to rolling in Kanawha County. I believe we started a revolution in education. I really do. I believe we fired the shot that was heard around the world. And I believe, maybe not in my lifetime, but somewhere down the road, these old West Virginia Hillbillies are going to be looked upon educational system

JD: You know, and educator told me just today that when he came here, here, Kanawha County School systems were rated....I think he said in the top 10 in the country. And now he says they're not even top ten in the state. Now, how would you respond to something like-, to a comment like that?

AH: Well, no reflection on the textbook controversy. I can understand that because the philosophy's not changed. in textbooks. And they're teaching in kindergarten today and going into the kindergarten's and telling the kids to be careful about people abusing their being careful about where they put their hands in the crowded parks in their clothing and things. And then by the time they get in elementary school, they're teaching them sex education, teaching them how to use contraceptives, teaching them all these things. That's no reflection on the textbook controversy, that's a reflection of that ten years of education. It's the educator that's brought it to the point it is now. Those textbooks then that were just being put into the system, and that sexual revolution among our youth today. Today if it's at the bottom of the totem pole in West Virginia, it is the Board of Education and the educators oKanawha County's fault, because we tried to stop it from getting to this point.

JD: Could this whole thing have been handled differently, and if so, how? The controversy I'm talking about.

AH: Could have been handled differently....I don't know. they almost tried. We had professionals, we had the grass root. We had about every element of society working on it.

JD: Was there ever a chance, when you got involved say on Labor Day of '74, was there ever a chance in your mind that this thing could have been settled without all the violence?

AH: Oh, my goodness, yes. The violent thingI was than that.

JD: How could it have been settled without the violence and so on?

AH: Well, Board of Education and said, "We've made a mistake."

JD: [inaudible]

AH: Their mistake and admit the mistake was made and take the books out, that's all it would have been. They were the ones who destroyed the harmony in this county. It wasn't the people. The people didn't create the controversy. They created the controversy by putting in the books. They tried to say to us, "We are book censors. We've been accused of being Nazi....."

JD: Yeah, that was what I was going to ask you about that.

AH: Censors. (JD: Books and stuff) We never bought books and stuff.

Are we the censors? They teach evolution, they teach abortion, they teach all these things. Who is the censors? We cannot teach creation, we cannot teach pro-life, we cannot teach all these things. They can have their say. We cannot even have free access to the schools to have a service in. They can play rock music, they can do anything they want to. Who is the censor? We're not censoring them. They're having their say. They're censoring us. We've been the ones that's deprived. The news media would not let us have our say. When I was on the Phil Donahue show, I felt like I was going into the lion's den.

JD: You actually went on the PhilDonahue show? (AH: Yes) And you felt like they were throwing you to.....

AH: Yes, I felt like I was going in the lion's den. I mean, PhiDonahue, I'm going to send Phil Donahue a letter and tell him I appreciate it. He's probably done more for the conservative movement than anybody. The service, he always played it down and made us look like a bunch of yo-yo's. Bring a bunch of transvestites or bunch of weirdo's in there, he'd pump 'em up

and make them look like they were glorified stars or something, I don't know. He's helped our movement, because people are tired of this garbage. But, I felt, you know, it's a backlash. It's reversed, it's backlashed on him.

JD: What was the personal impact on you with the whole controversy? What kind...you've shared some of that with your, you know, with your experience with the Lord.

AH: I'm getting ready to write a book about this. That's my personal experience.

JD: So, it's' still very deep in your soul.

AH: Oh, uh, I was in jail twice. I was taken to jail. No, I was in jail twice.

JD: The Kanawha County Jail?

AH: The Kanawha County Jail and the St Albans Jail.

JD: And what did they put you in jail for?

AH: Blocking a bus. (JD: That's all?) The reason I blocked the bus, the bus driver, I think there was twenty-some of bus garage one morning Kanawha County deputy sheriff was out there in front of the bus garage. We were walking there peacefully, drinking coffee. And Graley, Ezra Graley's brother, was taking the cups and putting them in a paper bag and carrying the bag. And he was off on the side of the highway and the bus driver drove in, swerved over, struck him on the leg. He dropped the bag of cups down and the sheriff walked over there and arrested him for littering.

JD: You actually saw that happening?

AH: Actually, and told the deputy sheriff's he saw the man hit-, strike him with the car, too. (JD: In a car or bus?) A car. He was coming to work. (JD: He was coming to work okay) I said, "Are you going to arrest that fellow for hit and run?" He said, "No, I'm arresting this man for littering." So we took him away from the Kanawha County Sheriff, Deputy Sheriff and sat down in the middle of the street. He arrested me, my wife, my daughter, my baby brother and almost six other couples. I don't know how many of us he arrested.

JD: One minister actually went to prison on this thing, Marvin Horan.

AH: Yes. And, and, you know, I often-, I've always said he was ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~frauding~~ ^{frauding}. I was at his trial. His defense was shabby. What they sent him for was conspiracy, conspiring a bomb. It's something ironic that anybody thatuh, that would perpetrate any violence, a man and you were going to blow a school up, that he'd take his own gas can out of his own garage and fill it full of gasoline and take it down to the school. I can't just imagine how, I mean, it's take an awful simple-minded person to think that they would take something out of their own car to do something like that and leave his evidence. That, you know, I smell a rat in that. The bombs supposedly was made in his office. That could have very well been. Anytime that you're a leader in the textbook-, in any situation, whether or not you're guilty or not, you're guilty by association. And conspiracy. That's what it amounts to. And whether he knew about it or not, they had access to his office and his office was used. So therefore, he was guilty. That's like being in the company of a murderer, you know. I think the man was framed. I think they were just looking for someone to use as an example, to try to defuse the textbook controversy. I know they were after me...very much. I had people out of the federal courthouse who believed in what we were doing. Because you see, when for God, God will put spies in the enemy's camp. Anduh, we had people in high places who believed in what we were doing. And they would always get the message to us. One night we were at the St. Albans City Hall and the federal marshals were there that night. And I realized in the beginning that the larger your forces are and the larger the more power that you might have, and more, more effective. So that's the reason why I joined forces with the bussing movement in Massachusetts. Now, I went to Boston, I went to Louisville, Kentucky and Detroit, Michigan and McKeesport, Pennsylvania and everywhere there was a talk show, an opportunity I could, a sounding board for me, I was there. Marvin stayed up Campbell's Creek and was satisfied with staying at didn't broaden his base and get his

communications out. I knew that if, if I were gonna be affective and I were gonna stay free.

Because there were people who were trying to frame us. And I was going out to make contacts and reach out. And a lady called me one night to tell me, this meeting down there-, and I thought the reason the federal marshals were there, they were still there and they were still investigating and trying to find out about the bombing. This lady told me.....

END OF INTERVIEW